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O F THE FARMERS RESIDING IN THE VICINITY OF THE
VIRGINIA CENTRAL RAILROAD.

The imperative necessities of the war have deprived the Company of the usual supply of wood for the locomotives and cross-ties for repairing the Road, which have heretofore have been furnished by contractors. Having now, to a great extent, to do what formerly was done by contractors, there is a demand for labor which the Company cannot supply without your assistance.

Since the war commenced this Company has almost lost its character as a private corporation, and may be regarded as an arm of public defence, and the Directors have conducted its operations as informal agents of the Government, receiving little or no aid, but having its resources crippled by the Government itself. I do not censure the Government, but I wish you to know the true state of facts. In the existing state of things you alone can furnish the aid required. The labor we need to put the Road in safe working order cannot be obtained from any other resources than that which I think it is your interest to spare from your farms. Of surplus labor, seeking hire, there is none.

I appeal to you not in behalf of the Company, but to your own interests and that of the Southern Confederacy.

Will you stand aloof at this time and leave the Company to try to struggle through difficulties it has no power to overcome? Will you incur the danger of this Road not being able to do the transportation necessary to maintain the Army and prevent the abandonment of the section of country in which you reside? I need not undertake to enlighten you as to your fate if our Army is compelled to fall back and the enemy takes possession. Will it then be any source of pleasure to think of the labor you employed in draining your lands, clearing off shrubbery, and dressing up waste places, as many do, in ordinary times, more for ornament than profit?

I submit this matter to your good sense and judgment. I do not ask you to neglect the ~~sowing~~ of any crops—all these are required to sustain the Army; but, as a practical farmer, I know many things may be omitted which usually occupy your hands, and enable you to spare some labor for the remainder of this year. If you were to send us aid gratuitously you would promote your interests; but I do not ask that—I will pay a high price. I will give FORTY DOLLARS per month for twenty-six working days for good laborers and find provisions.

I commend this subject to your serious consideration. You may think the proper officers might have hired more labor in the beginning of the year, but it is vain to discuss that question now. There was great difficulty then in obtaining hands, and those officers acted according to the best of their judgment. The fact stares you in the face that the Company needs a large number of hands. You all have them, and they are to be employed not for the benefit of the Stockholders as a corporation so much as for your own interests, being citizens occupying a section of country which cannot be defended unless the Road is put in good order.

E. FONTAINE, President.

OFFICE VA. CENTRAL RAILROAD,
September 2, 1863.

P. S. Persons sending hands will report to me at Beaverdam Depot, or W. G. Richardson, Road Master, at Frederick's Hall; and, in any case, we would be glad that each hand should bring a good axe. I hope to get prompt responses and at least one hundred hands.

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